

## Message Text

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ORIGIN HEW-08

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

UNCLAS STATE 123567

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TBIO HK TW

SUBJ: CHINESE HERBAL MEDICATIONS CONTAINING PHENYLBUTAZONE

1. FDA ADVISES IT HAS ISSUED ON JUNE 1, 1974 THE FOLLOWING PUBLIC WARNING ON CERTAIN MEDICATIONS CONTAINING A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS DRUG WHICH IS NOT DECLARED AS AN INGREDIENT:

"THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION TODAY WARNED AGAINST THE USE OF IMPORTED CHINESE HERBAL MEDICATIONS THAT CONTAIN A POWERFUL AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS DRUG, PHENYLBUTAZONE.

"FOUR KNOWN CASES OF AGRANULOCYTOSIS (A SEVERE BLOOD CONDITION) IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED BY ATTENDING HOSPITAL PHYSICIANS. ALL FOUR PATIENTS HAD BEEN TAKING ONE OR MORE CHINESE HERBAL MEDICATIONS FOUND BY FDA TO CONTAIN SEVEN TO THIRTY MG. PER TABLET OF THE DRUG, PHENYLBUTAZONE. ONE OF THE PATIENTS  
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DIED.

"THE PRODUCTS ARE DESCRIBED BY FDA AS HARD, ROUND BLACK OR BROWN PILLS, APPROXIMATELY 1/4 INCH IN DIAMETER, SEALED IN PLASTIC BAGS OR PACKAGED IN GLASS OR PLASTIC JARS OR BOTTLES.

"THE NAN LIEN PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY, LTD. IS LISTED ON BOX LABELS AS THE MANUFACTURER OF THREE DIFFERENT BRANDS: (1) LONG LIFE BRAND GINSENG SHENG HUI TSAITSAOWAN; (2) SANLUNGPAI GINSENG HUI SHENG TSAITSAOWAN; AND (3) CHUIFONG TOUKUWAN NAN LIEN. THE PILLS ARE BLACK AND MAY BE PACKED IN BRIGHT COLORED BLUE, GREEN, ORANGE, OR GOLD CARDBOARD BOXES. PICTURES APPEAR ON THESE BOXES DEPICTING MEN AND WOMEN SUFFERING BACK AND LEG PAINS.

"ANYONE USING THESE REMEDIES SHOULD STOP IMMEDIATELY AND CONSULT A PHYSICIAN ABOUT PREVIOUS EXPOSURE TO THEM.

"THE OTHER MANUFACTURER IS THE ICHONGTAI PHARMACEUTICA CO., LTD., TAINAN, TAIWAN, REPUBLIC OF CHINA. THE PILLS ARE BROWN AND PACKAGED 50 EACH IN TRANSLUCENT AMBER GLASS BOTTLES WITH WHITE SCREW CAPS. THE LABEL IS BLUE AND WHITE. EXCEPT FOR THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE MANUFACTURER, ALL OTHER LABELING INFORMATION IS IN CHINESE. THE BOTTLES MAY BE PACKED IN BLUE, WHITE AND GREEN BOXES, THREE INCHES IN HEIGHT. ANY USING THESE REMEDIES SHOULD STOP IMMEDIATELY AND CONSULT A PHYSICIAN ABOUT PREVIOUS EXPOSURE TO THE.

"THESE AND SIMILAR MEDICATIONS CONTAINING PHENYLBUTAZONE ENTER THE U.S. ILLEGALLY, GENERALLY IN SMALL QUANTITIES BY MAIL OR IN PERSONAL BAGGAGE. FDA HAS ALERTED THE U.S. CUSTOMS BUREAU TO DETAIN ALL SUSPECT PRODUCTS AT U.S. PORTS OF ENTRY. ALTHOUGH ILLEGAL, THE PRODUCTS MAY BE AVAILABLE OVER-THE-COUNTER AT GROCERY STORES IN CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN THE U.S. FDA IS INITIATING SURVEYS FOR THE ILLEGAL DRUGS IN MAJOR U.S. CITIES.

"ORDINARILY, HERBAL PREPARATIONS ARE HARMLESS AND HAVE NO SCIENTIFICALLY SUBSTANTIATED CURATIVE PROPERTIES. HOWEVER, THE SUSPECT PRODUCTS CONTAIN THE POTENT ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DRUG, PHENYLBUTAZONE. THIS DRUG IS LEGALLY AVAILABLE IN THIS COUNTRY ON A PRESCRIPTION BASIS ONLY AND SHOULD BE USED UNDER CLOSE SUPERVISION OF A PHYSICIAN."

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2. NAN LIEN PHARMACEUTICAL CO. LOCATED AT 24 HONHAM STAND WEST, NAM PAK HONG BLDG., 18TH FLOOR, FLAT 1, HONG KONG, ALSO HAS TAIWAN DISTRIBUTOR: SHEY FONG DISPENSARY, 104 PO-AI RD., TAIPEI.

3. FOR HONG KONG AND TAIPEI:

POSTS REQUESTED TO ADVISE HOST GOVERNMENT THAT SUSPECT PRODUCTS

PRODUCED BY THESE OR THER COMPANIES WILL BE DETAINED WHEN OFFERED  
FOR U.S. ENTRY. HOST GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE MADE AWARE OF POTENTIAL  
DANGER OF PRODUCTS CONTAINING PHENYLBUTAZONE. BROWN

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